



# SPARK GAP

Vol. 40, Issue 10 October 2023 *MARC - Serving Central Indiana Communities*

## *On Our M.A.R.C. :*

This Saturday, October 21, at 8 am we will be holding our monthly MARC meeting at Johnson County REMC Community Room 750 International Drive Franklin, IN 46131. All Amateur Radio Operators and interested people are encouraged to attend our monthly meetings. If you want to test for your license or upgrade your license you will need to register on the MARC website before you take your test. There is no charge to take the test for your Amateur Radio License.

Hope to see everyone there.

Bob N9SIU, Editor Spark Gap

## **CLUB DUES FOR 2023**

**It is that time of year for your membership dues for the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club. The annual membership dues is \$25.00 per year and has not changed from last year.**

**This also a good time to update any of your information for club records such as license upgrade, change of address, contact information or call sign.**

**This is also a good opportunity for new amateurs to join our club and join in our club activities for 2023.**

**Please see Jacki Frederick, KI6QOG M.A.R.C. Treasurer**





## **October Birthdays**

***KB9JMU --- James Adams***

***WB9FIK --- Bill Baldwin***

***KC9NJM --- Bob Jones***

***NQ8M --- Jeremey Jukes***

***KD9FBC --- Wilson Low***

***W9BZ --- Roger Lowary***

***K0CMD --- David Nienhuser***

***K9KTP --- Katie Palmer***

***KN9C --- Rudy Richardson***

***KM9S --- Darrell Sego***



As far as we know for now, we will have our annual Pumkin Patrol watching the highway over passes in Johnson County on October 31<sup>st</sup>. An amateur radio net will be established so any incidents can be reported directly to the Johnson County Sheriff's Department. Volunteers are needed to help support public safety on Halloween Night. There will be more information at the October MARC monthly meeting. If you would like to volunteer please contact Jackie, KI6QOG.

## **From the ARDC Grant we are getting the following equipment:**

Wireless Vantage Pro2 with 24-Hour Fan Aspirated Radiation Shield and WeatherLink Console

Yaesu FT-991A HF/VHF/UHF Multi-Mode Transceivers FT-991A

Laptop for the FT-991A to use WinLink and FT8

Yaesu FTM-500DR Mobile VHF/UHF C4FM Transceiver

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Diamond Antenna X700HNA Dual-Band Base/Repeater Antennas X700HNA

DX Engineering RG-400 High Isolation Coaxial Cable Assemblies DXE-RG400R010

Henry C250AB10R 10-250w Continuous 136-174 MHz Repeater Amplifier

BridgeCom TXRX 2m (VHF) 400W Duplexer

Tim

WC9G

## **Learning about radio does matter**

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

I recently received an email from someone who reads my blog that struck a chord with me. He wrote:

“I’ve been a ham for decades, operate all modes (but mostly CW), and do a lot of Parks on the Air (POTA). I also spend a lot of time recruiting people into the ham radio hobby and mentoring new hams. It’s that last focus that prompts this question.

“For a variety of reasons that I can’t put on my finger on, it seems like more and more hams don’t really care about how radios or antennas work, and don’t want to invest much time or effort into learning such things. They just want to turn it on and use it. How it works, and what’s going on inside of the box, aren’t important.

“For example, I know of one guy—a General-class licensee—who decided his top-of-the-line Yaesu HT was ‘defective’ because whenever he pressed the push-to-talk switch on one of the repeater frequencies, the radio transmitted on a different frequency. Ugh. Another guy I know thought that his hamstick wouldn’t tune because the wire coil was installed upside down. As you’d guess, the hamstick tuned and worked just fine.

“Some people say that we should get hung up on this. Get new hams into the hobby and they’ll learn as they go on. Except that doesn’t seem to be happening, at least not consistently. Even very experienced, highly educated hams can be clueless on very simple, fundamental radio concepts.

“So, here’s the question: does any of this matter? I don’t know how my microwave oven works, and I don’t need to, and I don’t want to. All I want to do is push a button. So maybe it’s perfectly fine that hams don’t know about radio technology and we should stop pretending that any of this matters. Put ‘em through a ‘ham cram’ and get them on the air. Or maybe amateur radio transceivers are different than microwave ovens and it does matter. I don’t know. I go back and forth on this and don’t really have a clear assessment in my mind.

“Anyway, since this seems like the kind of thing you’ve already thought about, I wonder what you make of all this. If you’re sitting around with nothing to do, I’d be curious to know what you think.”

## Yes, learning about radio does matter

This struck a chord with me because I teach ‘ham cram’ classes, and I often encounter people who think this way. They just want to push buttons and talk on the radio. They say, “I’m only going to use it when I go off-roading with friends,” or “I’m only going to use it when my CERT team is activated.”

I always ask them what they’re going to do when something goes wrong (and we know that at some point, something is going to wrong). I tell them that without some basic knowledge of how radios and antennas work, they aren’t going to be able to fix problems or work around them, and if they can’t do that, they’re not going to be very effective communicators and their experience is going to be very frustrating. Not only that, I explain that they’ll have a lot more fun with ham radio if they understand how the technology works.

So, the question is how to get these people to be more curious about radio technology and how to encourage them to learn more. Being insulting or negative isn’t the way to do it. I hope, for example, that when the guy complained about his Yaesu HT, that someone patiently explained how repeaters work. Sure, he should have known that already, but belittling him for not knowing this would only do more harm than good.

I don’t think that you can fault people for not knowing things, but you can fault them for not wanting to learn things. There’s a lot to learn in ham radio, and you can’t learn it all before you get a license. In fact, I’d argue that most things you can only learn after you get a license and start doing things.

Having said all that, our challenge is to make ham radio a place where those that want to learn things can thrive. I think that we’re doing better at that. Look at all the YouTube channels where you can learn about just about anything that ham radio has to offer. The ARRL is getting in on this as well, with its “Learning Center.”

I’d say not to worry about those who don’t want to invest the time and effort. They’re not going to be hams for very long. They’re going to get frustrated when they can’t get things to work and drift off to something else. Let’s concentrate those who are curious and able and willing to invest the time and effort and make good hams out of them.

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Dan Romanchik, KB6NU, is the author of the KB6NU amateur radio blog ([KB6NU.Com](http://KB6NU.Com)), the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides (<https://KB6NU.Com/study-guides/>), and often appears on the ICQPodcast (<https://icqpodcast.com>). When he’s not writing about amateur radio, he tinkers with electronics projects and operates POTA and works CW on the HF bands.

# Indiana 10-4 Statewide Communications Field Day

The Indiana 10-4 Statewide Communications Field Day was put on by IPSC (Integrated Public Safety Commission) [IPSC: Home \(in.gov\)](#) which is a related agency of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security [DHS: Related Agencies and Organizations \(in.gov\)](#), whose mission is to facilitate statewide public safety communications. IPSC provides interoperable and reliable public safety communications systems to all Hoosier first responders and public safety professionals for use during routine, emergency and task force situations. Their goal is to strengthen community safety and security by minimizing the financial and technological barriers to interoperable communications through interagency cooperation. The purpose of this Field Day was to check and test public safety communication equipment and vehicles, test communication pathways, and to bring amateur radio/auxiliary communication into statewide response and recovery efforts. This event was intended for Communication Unit (COMU) and Auxiliary Communication (AUXC) personnel. Each team attending brought their portable equipment, and all communication platforms were tested (VHF and UHF repeater and simplex operations, including digital modes (C4FM, DMR, WIRES-X, WinLink, etc...), HF including SSB and WinLink, and State trunked radio systems for those groups issued them.

MARC AuxComm was represented as a team comprised of Tim WC9G, Kyle AD9CR, and Jeremy NQ8M. Noel W9NMM participated with Marion County RACES, and Josh KC5GHM participated with the Indiana Department of Homeland Security. There were 10 tasks (AuxComm Injects) for our team to complete, given one at a time with a time limit to complete. These injects included:

- Team Safety Briefing and Setup. Our team set up 2 VHF/UHF/HF setups. One on a 60' mast, with the VHF/UHF dual band antenna >50' AGL.
- SEOC Contact: Contact the State Emergency Operations Center on HF Radio on 3.920 MHz SSB (changed to 3.910 MHz SSB due to an ongoing HF Net on 3.910 MHz). Each of our team checked into the Net, and informed Operations command, who changed the frequency. Each of our team contacted the Operations Center by SSB on the assigned HF frequency and received the required exercise code.
- VHF Contacts: Each Operator needs to Identify local 2m (VHF) repeaters and attempt to make 3 contacts (documenting callsigns and repeaters). We used the W9MID, W9IRA, and W9ICE VHF repeaters, documenting one or more contacts on each including with W8ISH who was set up at home, and KB9JMU mobile.
- UHF Contacts: Each Operator needs to Identify local 70cm (UHF) repeaters and attempt to make 3 contacts (documenting callsigns and repeaters). We used the 444.325 MHz RF linked southern Indiana linked repeater system, documenting three contacts each.
- HF Contacts: Each Operator with minimum General Class FCC license and HF capabilities, should attempt to make three (3) voice contacts outside the State of Indiana and document in the participant packet. We made 15 contacts with POTA activators in the Dominican Republic, Spain, Texas, Florida, West Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, Georgia, Delaware, and Pennsylvania, among other HF contacts.
- Digital Contacts: We made C4FM contacts, as well as contacts via WinLink using Vara HF through a 20m node at 5w using a portable HexBeam antenna.
- Site-to-Site Contact: Using whatever mode and combination of repeaters you prefer, attempt to make one (1) contact with an operator at the opposite site of operations (North, Plymouth Indiana site as we



were at the Central Westfield IN site). There was only 1 amateur radio setup at the North site, and they had packed up for the day. We networked with the IN Department of Homeland Security to make that site-to-site contact with Rick Glover KD9VCQ, the State Disaster Communication Coordinator.

- Trivia Questions: We completed 7 trivia questions such as:
  - 3 Amateur Radio Organizations that can be activated for disaster communications (A.R.E.S., R.A.C.E.S., S.A.T, and Local Radio Clubs/AuxComms)
  - At a public safety vehicle, find out if any operate a Federal SHARES radio station: IPSC and Rick Glover KD9VCQ
  - Who is the Disaster Communications Coordinator for IPSC: Rick Glover KD9VCQ
  - What is the callsign for the IPSC SHARES Radio Station: NNA5BG
  - How many counties are in IN: 92
  - The Communications Act of what year began the regulation of telephone, telegraph, and radio communications: 1934
  - In 1953, two men named Ross Bateman W4AO and Bill Smith W3GKP were famous for what test using Amateur Radio: First Amateur Radio Lunar Echoes (E-M-E, or Moonbounce)
- Public Safety Contacts: On 146.52 (simplex), public safety groups will be attempting to make contact with you from their command vehicles to test their onboard equipment and their ability to make contact with you. When they reach out, respond indicating they are heard and note the agencies that made contact. We made contact with Marion County RACES, the State RACES AuxComm Group, Hamilton County EMA, and Hamilton County RACES.

Our MARC AuxComm team successfully completed all the required tasks. The evaluator stated that we were “the most organized and most prepared group at the Westfield location.” Good work MARC AuxComm! We debriefed at our monthly MARC AuxComm meeting typically held the first Wednesday of each month at the White River Township Fire Station #51 in the training room.

### WC9G Setup





Setting up antennas



Station set up and operation while other setup occurs



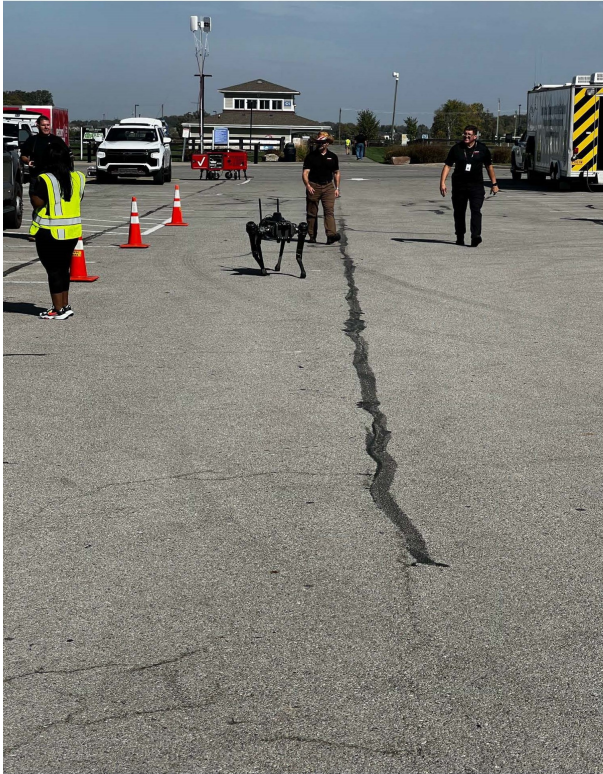












AuxComm Meeting







W8ISH Setup for VHF/UHF/WinLink





## MID-STATE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the **THIRD SATURDAY** of each month  
at the Johnson County REMC building 750 International Dr. Franklin, IN 46131

See our website, [www.midstatehams.org](http://www.midstatehams.org), for maps on how to get to our meeting.

Everyone is welcome; you do not have to be a *HAM* to attend our meetings or a member of the club.

### W9MID Repeater:

Offical SkyWarn Repeater for Johnson County

146.835/  
146.235 MHz  
(151.4 Hz PL Tone)

### W9MID Repeater:

443.525/  
448.525 MHz  
(151.4 Hz PL Tone) YEASU SYSTEM FUSION (C4FM)

### Club Officers:

President: Tim Aldridge - WC9G  
Vice President: Rhonda Curtis - WS9H  
Secretary: Jim Adams – KB9JMU  
Treasurer: Jacki Frederick - KI6QOG  
Repeater Trustee: Chris Frederick – KQ9Y  
Club Historian: Jack Parker – W8ISH  
Club P.I.O. :

Weekly Net: Sunday evening 7:00 PM ARES/RACES members and ALL RADIO AMATEURS  
146.835/146.235 MHz (151.4 Hz PL Tone)

The Official Newsletter of the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

P.O. Box 836

Franklin, Indiana

46131

Spark Gap Editor: Robert LaGrange N9SIU

*Please send your articles to my email: [n9siu@yahoo.com](mailto:n9siu@yahoo.com) no later than the 3rd week of the month.*



**Thanks to Johnson Co. REMC for the use of their building for meetings and testing.**

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